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## Legislator's Office Allowance Funds - Use of State Resources to Manage Account and Gift of Travel Disclosure—discussed at Ethics Committee meeting on February 26, 2013

**Beginning in 2013, legislators received Office Allowance Account funds as personal income.**

**QUESTION:** May legislative staff manage a legislator's "Public Office Expense Account"? **Additional Facts:** The legislator deposited money received from Office Allowance funds into a Public Office Expense Account. The account would only be used for expenses related to "serving as a legislator" and not for any expenses incurred for personal, political or campaign purposes. The account would be managed under similar parameters previously outlined in the "Accountable Allowance Reimbursement Guidelines" approved by Legislative Council.

**ANSWER:** A legislator may have legislative staff manage a 'Public Office Expense Account' that is set up exclusively for expenses incurred while conducting legislative business. The purpose of managing the account has a legislative purpose. Managing the account could include: reconciling bank statements, writing checks, keeping receipts, recording items on a spreadsheet, etc.

**QUESTION:** Is a gift of travel/hospitality disclosure required if a legislator personally pays for travel/hospitality costs associated with staff travel to attend a conference or meeting related to a matter of legislative concern? **Additional Facts:** The

legislator previously paid for staff travel and hospitality expenses related to a matter of legislative concern with "accountable" Office Allowance Account funds.

**ANSWER:** A legislator may personally pay for lodging for staff members to attend a conference related to a matter of legislative concern. The receipt of lodging would be considered a gift under AS 24.60.080.

Legislative related travel expenses are either recorded internally – through LAA Accounting– or externally–by way of an ethics disclosure. Previously, LAA Accounting provided an accounting of funds used from the accountable Office Allowance funds for such an expense resulting in no gift of travel/hospitality ethics disclosure.

AS 24.60.080 does not ban such gifts as described above but only requires their disclosure. Therefore, the legislator's staff is required to complete a Gift of Travel/Hospitality for a Matter of Legislative Concern disclosure if the amount of lodging is \$250 or more stating the gift of lodging is from the legislator. The disclosure is due within 60 days from the beginning date of the trip. The legislator does not need to file a disclosure.

**Note:** The use of POET account funds is also permitted for this purpose. □

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## Endorsement of Municipal Candidates during a Legislative Session



AS 24.60.031 does not prohibit a legislator or legislative employee from endorsing a candidate for state or municipal office at any time, unless the endorsement is part of a solicitation for a contribution. [AO 07-06](#)

- **Example of permitted activity:** Legislator or legislative employee endorses a municipal candidate in an ad or campaign flier that does not include a solicitation for campaign contributions.
- **Examples of prohibited activity:** Hosting or co-hosting a fundraiser for a municipal candidate; or having your name listed on the invitation for the fundraiser.

## Reminder!

**Reminder!**

Legislator's Annual Financial Disclosure is due to APOC by **Friday, March 15, 2013.**

Call APOC at 276-4176 if you have questions.

Legislative staff are permitted to help with preparing and filing a legislator's annual disclosure.

**Reminder!**

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*"Knowledge is the  
key to ethical  
behavior."*

*Plato*

*Another important reminder...*

## CHARITY EVENT TICKETS - AS 24.60.080(c)(10)

Persons who are not lobbyists may give a ticket to a pre-approved charity event and gifts in connection with the charity event that have a value of \$250 or more. A disclosure is required within 60 days if the cumulative value of the gift(s) from the same person is \$250 or more in value within a calendar year.

The disclosure requirement also applies to immediate\* family members.

\*Immediate family member means spouse or domestic partner, child, including a stepchild and adoptive child of the person, a parent or sibling, if financially dependent or share a substantial financial interest with the legislator or legislative employee.

### THE NEW DISCLOSURE FORM WILL REQUIRE THE FOLLOWING:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Name of donor                    | ✓ Date of sanctioned charity event   |
| ✓ Occupation of donor              | ✓ Description of gift(s) with a value of \$250 or more   |
| ✓ Address of donor                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ticket/admission fee. Value.</li> <li>• Other Gift(s) received. Value. List items.</li> </ul> |
| ✓ Name of sanctioned charity event |  |

Lobbyists (includes an immediate family member of a lobbyist or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist) continue to be under the prohibition limiting the value of a ticket and gifts to which the tickets may entitle the bearer to receive to less than \$250 in value within a calendar year if from the same lobbyist.